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Utilization Of A Focus Group To Evaluate The Perceived Stress Levels And Coping Mechanisms Of Student Registered Nurse Anesthetists.

Abstract
Each year, thousands of Student Registered Nurse Anesthetists (SRNAs) matriculate into a nurse anesthesia educational program, confronted with unforeseen challenges and stressors. Although a certain amount of stress is essential to stimulate learning, excessive stress can have dire consequences in delaying a students' academic and clinical progression. The purpose of this Capstone Project was to explore and describe the perceptions of 12 SRNAs relevant to their stress levels and coping behaviors in the management of academic and personal stress. The clinical research questions guiding the study examined the stress levels and coping behaviors of the SRNAs as measured by the Perceived Stress Survey (PSS) and the Ways of Coping Questionnaire (WOCQ) instruments. The data were analyzed through content analysis identifying common themes that evolved from the focus groups. The results of the study clearly indicated that the majority (75%) of SRNAs perceived themselves as highly stressed. Academic stressors identified by the participants included ineffective time management, workload, and poor communication. Personal stressors acknowledged by the participants comprised of inadequate personal time, familial relationships, and financial problems. To foster an atmosphere of learning in the academic and clinical setting, effective coping mechanisms must be established.